



Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control • www.scdhec.gov

Vancomycin Intermediate/Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (VISA/VRSA)

What is VISA/VRSA?	VISA/VRSA are antibiotic resistant forms of staph bacteria. Staph bacteria is one of the most common bacteria, most often found harmlessly on the skin and in the noses of healthy people. Occasionally, the staph bacteria can cause an infection. In fact, staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of infection in the US. Most of these infections are minor. However, they can sometimes be very serious, and even fatal. Most staph bacteria can be successfully treated with the antibiotic Vancomycin. Unfortunately, some strains of staph have become resistant to the antibiotic Vancomycin.
What are the symptoms?	<p>Most infections caused by <i>S. aureus</i> are skin and soft tissue infections such as abscesses or cellulitis.</p> <p>Abscess: Pocket of infection that forms at the site of injury; Usually filled with pus; Area surrounding the abscess is usually red, painful and swollen and the skin; surrounding the abscess can feel warm to the touch.</p> <p>Cellulitis: An infection of the underlying layers of the skin; Usually results from a scrape or cut in the skin which allows bacteria to enter, although no injury may be apparent; Cellulitis can occur anywhere in the body, but most often occurs on the legs or arms; Symptoms include redness, swelling, and pain at the site of infection.</p> <p><i>S. aureus</i> can also cause serious infections such as pneumonia (infection of the lungs) or bacteremia (bloodstream infection). Symptoms of these infections include: difficulty breathing, malaise, fever, or chills.</p> <p>If you suspect you may have an infection with <i>S. aureus</i> contact your healthcare provider.</p>
How is VRSA treated?	To date, VISA & VRSA have been treatable with other antibiotics
How do people catch this disease?	VRSA is spread by close person-to-person contact. The VISA/VRSA infections most often develop in people with underlying health conditions such as diabetes and kidney disease, previous infections with MRSA, and people requiring IV's or catheters.
What can be done to stop the spread of this disease?	<p>Antimicrobial drugs intended for bacterial infections should not be taken for viral infections such as colds, coughs, or the flu. If your health care provider determines that you do not have a bacterial infection, ask about ways to help relieve your symptoms. Do not pressure your provider to prescribe an antibiotic. Take medicine exactly as your health care provider prescribes. Take the antibiotic until it is gone, even if you are feeling better. Do not save the medication to treat yourself or others later.</p> <p>And, always wash your hands thoroughly using soap and water.</p>

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Region 7

Serving Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties

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